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## HOW FARM WOMEN MAKE POULTRY RAISING PAY

A radio talk by H. L. Shrader, Poultry Extension Specialist, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, September 5, 1934, by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations.

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Some of you good Farm and Home listeners may be a little skeptical about making poultry pay when feed is high and scarce and egg prices are low. I'll admit it has been hard, but it can and has been done. As evidence of that let me tell you of a recent conversation with the president of a certain land grant college in one of the drouth stricken States. This state along with several others have a large number of farm families on the relief rolls. A survey of several thousand showed that not a single family, when they applied for relief, kept a flock of 50 or more hens. To this college president, it was quite significant that the farm family that had the energy and initiative to raise and keep poultry did not need to apply for State relief.

As I said before, the task of making poultry pay the last two years has not been an easy one. Records from demonstration farm flocks in various states show a narrow margin between the feed cost and selling price per dozen of eggs. The margin of 8 or 10 cents a dozen which was quite general in previous years has dwindled to 2 or 3 cents. Nevertheless, by trimming unnecessary expense and holding up the production that profit margin has been there. It is here that farm women have played so important a part.

Poultry raising from the incubation of the eggs, the brooding of the chicks, the caring for the laying flock to the marketing of the eggs and cockerels has always required a constant attention to small details. The farm woman either took care of such chores herself or served as a reminder to the children, her better half or the hired man to "shut up the chickens so a varmint wouldn't get them." She saw that the laying hens had plenty of fresh water or rescued the baby chicks' share of the surplus skim milk from the hogs and calves. She helped to cut expenses by brooding in brick or oil drum brooders that burned home cut wood.

The farm woman can really make poultry pay when allowed a free hand in feeding. It may be because she has so much experience in feeding her own family three times a day that she seems to have the right intuition with feeding the poultry flock. She takes great pride in setting a good table and likewise in the poultry yard, when she has the feed available, she enjoys feeding the growing birds and the laying flock generously. She knows (and experiment station results bear out this fact) that hens fed both grain and laying mash produce more and cheaper eggs than a flock fed only grain. She realizes the economic value of a certain per cent of animal protein such as meat scrap or milk. She knows that her hens do better when fed shelled corn, rather than the lazy-like method of throwing them a few ears and letting them pick off the kernels till their bills are sore. It is in following such details that she makes the flock pay.

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The farm women play a very important part in the marketing of poultry and poultry products. This is true whether in the curb markets of the south or with the cash buyer of the corn belt. She makes poultry pay by keeping up the quality. With eggs this consists of gathering and marketing them frequently and keeping them cool and clean. If she can get the "men folks" to move the brooder house to clean ground she likes to get her baby chicks early. Early broilers bring the highest prices and early pullets start to lay during the high priced fall egg season.

There is a close personal touch between the poultry flock and the farm living. The egg money so often provides the shoes and school books for John and Mary - to say nothing of the coffee, sugar, and dress goods that must be bought at the Store. She watches the poultry flock details because she wants such things for her home.

Did any of you listeners ever belong to a Home Convenience Club? The farm women in such a club set aside a certain setting of eggs or lot of baby chicks the sale of which goes toward purchasing some home convenience that they might otherwise not obtain. Can you imagine a single hatch of chicks growing into a kitchen sink or a pressure cooker, or even a rocking chair. I have seen it done and those chicks certainly received all the necessary care and attention.

If you ask me how farm women make poultry pay, I would sum it up briefly by saying they use good purebred stock, feed it generously on a balanced ration, house it comfortably with sanitary surroundings, and mixing with this a liberal portion of the care, the interest and attention to the small details.

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